



Charles Sturt
University

2021

Student Guide to Professional Experience Placement

Faculty of Arts and Education
Workplace Learning

Bachelor of Education (Birth - 5 Years)

Introduction

Professional experience is a foundational requirement of your Bachelor of Education (Birth - 5 years) degree. Professional experience provides you with the opportunity to extend your insight into the role of the teacher in an early childhood service and provide scope for the development of professional pedagogy. It offers you an opportunity to observe, plan, implement and reflect upon learning, play and relationships for young children; to communicate with families, teachers and other educators to address the learning capabilities of young children in a group setting; to respond positively to family and community cultures in caregiving and education practices; and to implement quality environments and leadership for wellness and wellbeing for young children.

During professional experience, you will collaborate with your mentor to observe, document and intentionally plan for children's learning following the pedagogical practices relating to the [Early Years Learning Framework](#) (EYLF), the [National Quality Standards](#) (NQS) for Early Childhood Education and Care, and the [Australian Professional Standards for Teachers – Graduate Level](#).

This Student Guide to Professional Experience Placement provides an overview of expectations for professional experience in the Bachelor of Education (Birth – 5 years) degree. This degree requires two professional experience placements to be undertaken:

- EPT308: Infant Pedagogy for 0-2 years (20 day placement)
- EPT326: Early Childhood Professional Practice (25 day placement in 3-5 years setting)

This guide should be read in conjunction with the [Professional Experience Handbook](#) for a comprehensive understanding of all placement requirements undertaken within a Charles Sturt University initial teacher education degree.

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Administrative Information for Students

Starting and Completing Placement

Step 1: Preparing for placement

To prepare for your placement it is essential that you log into the InPlace placement management system to upload all the mandatory documents (evidence that all required checks and training are completed) and use the self-placement tool to submit an application.

[Click here for instructions on using InPlace and applying for your placement](#)

[Click here for information on Mandatory Documents](#)

In order to avoid a personal conflict of interest, you are advised that you are unable to complete a placement in an early childhood setting where:

- you are presently employed or volunteer.
- you have been employed or worked as a volunteer in the previous 2 years.
- your own child or a close relative attends the service.
- a close relative either as a teacher, educator or as a member of the non-teaching staff is employed at the service.

In addition, you are advised that you are required to:

- make every possible attempt to complete your two placements at different services as this will extend your experiences. If this is not possible you will need to be granted permission by the Course Director.
- commence placement no sooner than Week 3 of the University session and only once your Goals have been approved and your early childhood service confirmed by the Workplace Learning Team.

Step 2: On placement

You should be familiar with the learning and teaching activities that are expected of you whilst on placement. These are provided in the Progression of Teaching at the end of this guide.

Whilst on placement you should also aim to become part of the staff as soon as possible by undertaking your duties in a professional manner. You are regarded as a temporary member of staff and, accordingly, should observe the same conditions as your mentor.

- Wear your university student ID card in a clear plastic lanyard or clear plastic name badge during visits and placements.
- Present the following to the EC Setting prior to commencing the placement:
 - Working with Children Check clearance notice
 - Letter of Introduction
 - Permission to Observe Forms
 - [Insurance Letter](#)

- Adhere to all early childhood service policies and procedures.
- Keep your email and internet usage to a minimum and only for professional experience.
- Dress in a way which is acceptable to the particular early childhood service at which you are placed.
- Ensure that your mentor is able to be present for at least 4 out of 5 days a week of your placement. In the event of any unplanned absences by the mentor then it is requested that you advise your Professional Experience Liaison Officer (PELO) immediately who will make suitable academic arrangements for you during the mentor's absence.
- Organise your hours of placement schedule, which needs to be a minimum of a recurring two (2) days per week for seven (7) hours per day (excluding break times).
- Confirm that your mentor has been able to access the mentor webpage detailing the placement.
- Confirm expected hours of work; where to go and who to contact upon arrival.
- Maintain a high level of professionalism during the placement; including maintaining a level of confidentiality about your experiences and being judicious about any information conveyed to others outside of the EC service.
- Contribute to professional practice by taking the initiative in offering to undertake additional responsibilities and extra activities.

At the *mid-point of the placement*, you should also ensure that you participate in a collaborative review of the progress made on your placement with your supervising teacher and review progress against the focus areas of the Professional Experience Report and your Professional Experience Goals.

Difficulties and obtaining assistance

If you are experiencing difficulties, you should make use of all personnel who are in a position to help. A suggested order of the people who should be approached in the event of difficulties being experienced is as follows:

- Supervising Teacher
- Director/Principal
- University Liaison Officer (ULO)
- Subject Coordinator

If serious problems arise, you or your supervising teacher should contact the Workplace Learning Team immediately at FOAE-WPL@csu.edu.au

If you are experiencing difficulty with your Supervising Teacher or Director/Principal, initial contact should be made with the ULO.

Charles Sturt University Academic Progress Regulations

It is sometimes the case that you may experience difficulty in demonstrating sufficient progress towards meeting the standard required while on placement. In these circumstances, you may be placed “at risk” of failing and a Developmental Support Plan may be implemented. This process is outlined in the Professional Experience Handbook: Section 3- Student Placement Support and Review Process.

While every endeavour will be made to assist you, a grade of ‘unsatisfactory’ may still be awarded if you have not demonstrated the standards required by the end of the placement. As professional experience subjects are regarded as indicators of professional suitability, a failure in the professional experience component will mean you have not met an essential element of the Academic Progress Regulations and you may be required to complete further professional experience.

Absences

Public Holidays:

If any public holidays (for example, Australia Day, Easter, ANZAC Day, Queen's Birthday, etc) fall during the placement period, students are entitled to **ONE** of these days' exemption from placement. This means that this **ONE** day does **NOT** need to be made up. Any additional public holidays must be made up by the student. Note that these public holidays **DO NOT** include the University-wide shutdown period over Christmas and New Year.

Christmas and New Year University Shutdown Period:

Students **MUST NOT** attend placement during the annual University-wide shutdown period, even if their placement service is in operation. The University is shut down and therefore students are not covered by university insurance during this time. Additionally, student support, WPL, lecturers, and PELOs are not available during this time. Further procedures regarding the notification and documentary evidence of an absence can be located in the Professional Experience Handbook: Section 2 - Attendance.

Contact Details

If you have any queries or would like further information about this placement, please contact the appropriate person:

Subject Coordinator

Workplace Learning Team

Faculty of Arts and Education Courses Team

Responsible for:

The academic aspects of the subject.

Responsible for:

The organisation and administration of the placement; communication with the location

Responsible for:

The administrative aspects of your course

The Subject Coordinator can help you with:

Questions about the Subject Outline, the Interact site, Learning Modules, Resources, Assessment Items and anything about the learning you will do in this subject.

The Workplace Learning Team can help you with:

Questions about your placement, attendance, at risk procedures etc.

The Courses Team can help you with:

Questions about the subject you need to enrol in, the progression of your course, pre-requisites and anything about your Course.

Please check the subject Interact2 site for Subject Coordinator details.

Workplace Learning Officer

FOAE-WPL@csu.edu.au

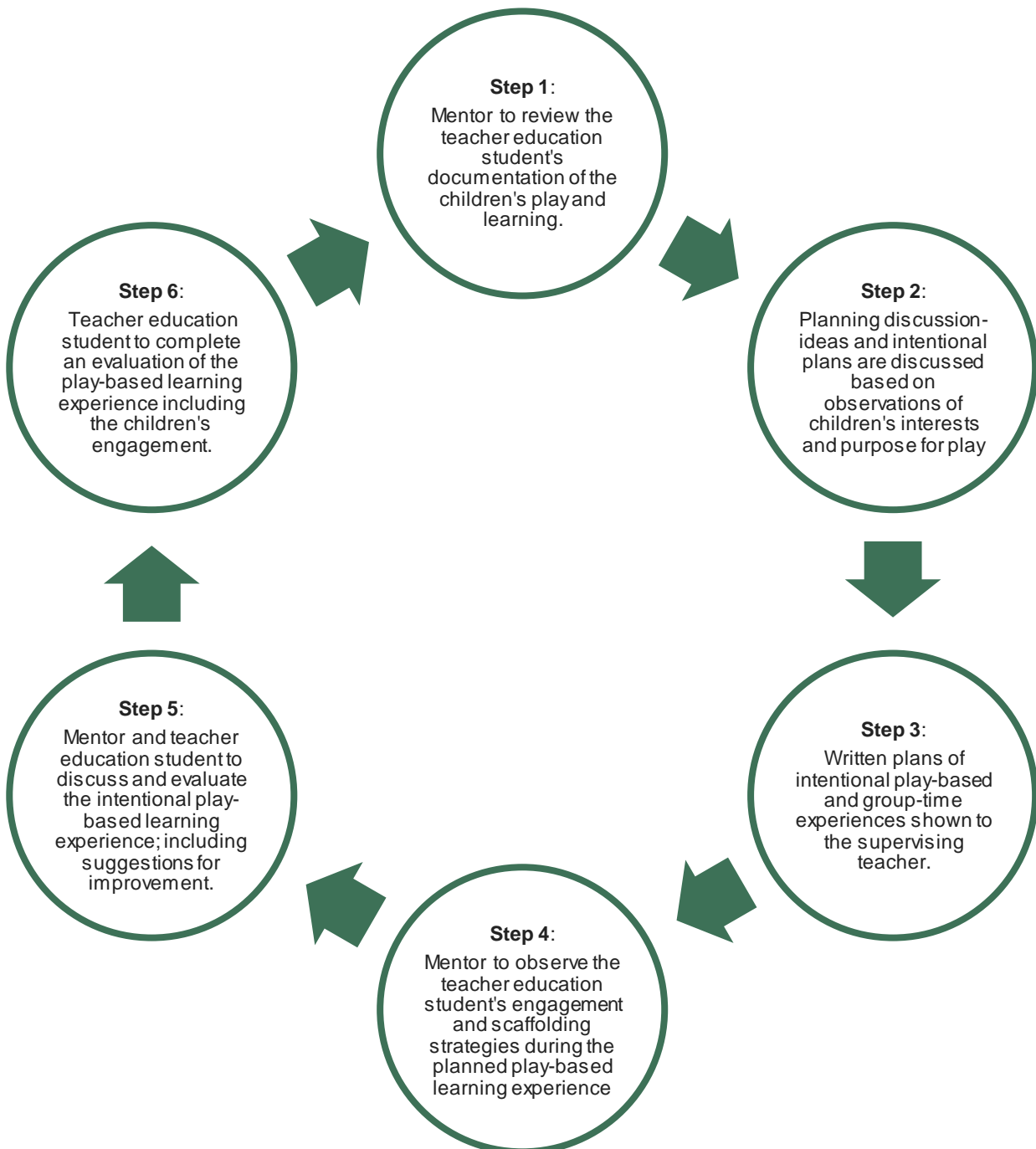
Course Administrative Officer

ask@csu.edu.au

Cycle of Supervision

Early Childhood Placements:

The teacher education student and supervising teacher should engage in the following cycle:



Summary of Expectations in Professional Experience

Learning and Teaching Activities

You **MUST** be proactive in your own learning. This means that you must seek out your mentor every day and provide them with your professional experience folder with documentation of the children's learning, and the intentional teaching plan/s for children's learning prior to teaching. It is an expectation that learning experiences are planned and discussed with the mentor prior to the implementation of each learning experience.

Forward planning and organisation is essential for your successful completion of professional experience placements. Please leave your folder on the bench in the room in which your mentor works. There is a possibility the mentor may be working in another room to you. It is important you take responsibility for your learning and work, ensuring you are proactive in seeking supervision and mentorship.

Professional experience documentation

It is essential for you to always have your documentation complete, up-to-date and organised. During your placement, you are required to maintain your documentation in a professional experience folder in a tidy and professional manner. This folder needs to be accessible to your mentor and PELO throughout the placement. Please do not leave your documentation on your iPad or Laptop or at home. Your work needs to be printed off every night and placed as a hard copy in your folder. You may also be asked to send through a sample of documentation to your PELO through the placement.

Additionally, you will be required to access the CSU Interact2 subject site for information on documentation of children's learning and planning appendices and announcements.

During the final week of your placement, the professional experience folder must be submitted to your mentor for review. **It should NOT be returned to the University.**

Teaching Progression

The professional experience placements within the Bachelor of Education (Birth – 5 years) degree have different expectations for the progression of teaching you are expected to undertake to meet placement requirements. You can access the progression of teaching relevant to your professional experience subject by clicking on the appropriate link below:

[EPT308: Infant Pedagogy for 0-2 years](#)

[EPT326: Early Childhood Professional Practice](#)